

In order to reduce the gap in production and demand envisaged at the end of IXth Plan period, under the directives of the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure (CCI), in July, 1997, a Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Member-Secretary, Planning Commission, with Secretary (Coal), Secretary (Power) and Chairman, Railway Board as its Members, to consider, among other things, measures for removal of bottlenecks and accelerating the progress of implementation of on-going coal projects to reduce the above gap in production and demand. Arising out of the recommendations of the Committee, the Ministry of Coal carried out a project-by-project exercise to explore the possibilities for incremental coal production during the Ninth Plan period. The Ministry concluded that an incremental production of 11 million tonnes of coal from CIL sources is possible during the Ninth Plan over and above the Ninth Plan target of 303 million tonnes if additional resources were made available to CIL and acquisition of forest land involved in some projects is expedited.

Twenty captive mining blocks have been allotted to private parties/public sector undertakings for power generation. As per the assessment of the Working Group, these blocks are expected to produce about 13 million tonnes of coal by 2001-02. Subject to materialisation of the demand mentioned above, the gap between the demand for power sector and availability of coal for the power sector from CIL/SCCL will be bridged by coal production from captive mining blocks/import.

[English]

#### Printing Order of Currency Notes

509. SHRI RAMCHANDRA VEERAPPA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware that Reserve Bank of India's printing order of 160 crores of 500/- Rupee notes run into rough whether;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government in this regard; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government to cover up the shortage of currency notes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) No, sir.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

(d) The following steps have been taken to cover up the shortage of currency notes:

- (1) Coinisation of lower denomination notes of Rupee 1, Rs. 2 and Rs. 5 and diversion of the

capacity so released for printing notes of higher denominations.

- (2) Modernisation of the two note printing presses at Nashik and Dewas.
- (3) Setting up of two new note-printing presses under RBI, i.e. one at Mysore (Karnataka) and other in Salboni (West Bengal) with an annual capacity of 4950 million pieces each.
- (4) Import of 3,600 million pieces of printed notes from abroad, as a one time measure.

#### Pollution in Colliery Areas

510. SHRI DINESH CHANDRA YADAV :  
SHRI RAM BAHADUR SINGH :

Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the report appearing in the "Times of India" dated July 21, 1997 regarding suffering of thousands of people living in the Ib Valley open cast coalfields in Orissa from various diseases due to pollution in the colliery area; and

(b) if so, the remedial measures have been taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. The employees of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd. (MCL) working in Ib Valley are also staying in the same coalfield where other non-employees are staying. M.C.L. does not carry medical examination of people other than its own employees nor do MCL have any record of their medical examination. Health check-up of 3658 employees of MCL living in Ib Valley has revealed that not even a single case of pneumoconiosis has been detected and confirmed. However two suspected cases are yet to be confirmed by Pneumoconiosis Board. Two T.B. cases have been detected. It may be noted that diseases such as T.B. & other respiratory problems are not related to coal dust.

(b) Measures for control of coal dust taken by MCL include control of dust at generation point itself by adopting wet drilling, using dust extractors, doing controlled blasting, dust suppression by automatic water sprinklers both fixed point as well as mobile. Black topping of roads, raising of green belts, use of dust suppressing chemical and regenerative air vacuum cleaner is under active consideration of the management. Regular monitoring of air, water, noise and soil is being done through Central Mine Research Institute at Dhanbad.

#### Import Curbs on Foreign Farm Goods

511. SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to remove import curbs on foreign farm goods within a few years being a signatory to the World Trade Organisation;

(b) if so, the main items of farm goods;

(c) whether any plan has been mooted out to protect the interests of the Indian farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (b) Pursuant to the meeting of the Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) held on 20–21 January, 1997, India presented to the WTO on 19 May, 1997 a plan for the elimination of all residual quantitative restrictions on imports, including those on agricultural products maintained for balance of payments purposes to the WTO on 19 May 1997. This plan was considered at the resumed consultations with India of the WTO Committee on Balance of Payments Restrictions on 10–11 June, 1997 and on 30 June —1 July, 1997, when noting the divergence of opinion among WTO members on the Plan, it was agreed to conclude the consultations.

Subsequently, six WTO Members, namely Australia, Canada, the European Communities, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States of America, requested consultations with India under Article XXII of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1994 and the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes. Pursuant to these consultations agreement has been reached with Canada, the EC and Switzerland in respect of the time-schedules for the elimination of residual quantitative restrictions on imports maintained for balance of payment purposes. Negotiations towards a mutually satisfactory solution with Australia and New Zealand are in an advanced stage. At the request of the USA a panel has been constituted on 18 November, 1997 to examine the US allegation that the continued maintenance of quantitative restrictions on imports by India is inconsistent with India's obligations under the WTO Agreement.

(c) to (d) The quantitative restrictions on imports are proposed to be eliminated in a phased manner so that the interests of the farmers in India are protected to the maximum extent. Simultaneously efforts are being made to improve productivity of Indian agriculture and to enhance overall competitiveness. Safeguard measures to protect domestic production, such as protection through tariffs, anti-dumping measures, countervailing measures to offset the effect of unjustifiable subsidies and safeguard measures to prevent damage to domestic production through surge in imports, are proposed to be utilised effectively.

[Translation]

### Export of Ornaments

512. SHRI SOHANVEER SINGH :  
DR. RAMVILAS VEDANTI :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be please to state:

(a) whether India has exported gold ornaments in huge quantity to the foreign countries during the last three years;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the foreign exchange earned by the country during the said period; and

(d) the value of orders for export of gold ornaments received during 1997–98?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (DR. BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) to (c): There has been substantial growth in export of gold jewellery (including studded jewellery) from India over the last three years.

The foreign exchange earned by exports of gold jewellery during the last three years and the growth in this sector are as follow:—

(Value US \$ Million)		
Year	Value	Growth(%)
1994–95	421.20	36.49
1995–96	480.40	14.06
1996–97 (Provisional)	511.80	6.54

(Source : DGCIS)

(d) Export orders are received directly by individual exporters all over India and, therefore, it is not possible to know the exact figures unless exported. However, it is expected that the export growth trend will continue during 1997–98.

### Customs Duty on Edible Oil

513. SHRI MAHESH KANODIA :  
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently made heavy reduction in the customs duty on the import of edible oils;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government are aware of the adverse impact of this heavy reduction on domestic food industry; and